

Optometric Education, 1997, v. 23, no.1, p.19.

ISSN 1521-4230 0098-6917

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The Virtual Vision Library

The Ohio State University College of Optometry

Contributed by:	Susan Kroll, M.L.S., Librarian
Library:	Prior Health Sciences Library
Date Founded:	1847
Professional librarians, FTE:	9.5
Computer specialists and support staff, FTE:	20
Hourly or student help, FTE:	30
Estimated number of volumes in collection	
Website Address:	bones.med.ohio-state.edu

The Prior Library completed an \$8 million renovation in October, 1996. Optometry faculty and students now have access to the latest technology, as the Library increased its computers from 8 to 80 with the renovation. A web based front end is available on the computers providing instant access to the electronic catalog or health sciences databases. The statewide OhioLINK library system connecting the library's holdings of 44 colleges and universities in Ohio enables faculty and students to search for books and journals, and obtain materials locally or throughout the State within days. A computer based curriculum laboratory is also located in the Library and a committee has been formed with Optometry faculty representation to select curriculum based software.

Seven group study/conference rooms are available to support meetings and student group study, and a 40-seat classroom can also be scheduled to hold regular classes. The renovation has also increased the space available to support book stacks holding the book and journal collections. For the first time since 1972, when the Library began occupying the present building, all books and journals are on open stacks for use by faculty and students. Prior to the renovation, much of the collection was held in a storage facility due to lack of space. A new library feature is the consumer health area especially designed to provide lay-oriented books to support information needs of patients, their families and the community.

The goal of the renovation was to reach forward with technology while looking back to

history. This resulted in the development of a new library department, the Medical Heritage Center. Built with private donations, the 20,000 square foot Center provides closed book stacks to hold rare books and special collections complete with a customized heating and air conditioning system which keeps the materials at the proper temperature and humidity. A research room has been built so faculty can review rare books on site. Three scholars' offices are also located in the Center and have been furnished to support visiting scholars who wish to do long-term research using the collection. The focal point of the Medical Heritage Center is the 3,000 square foot meeting room designed to support educational and social functions. Although the Heritage Center is just beginning, the Library has already developed a small, but high quality rare book collection and has an antique medical instrument collection that is nationally known.

Since completing the renovation, the Library has seen a 400% increase in the use of the facility and collection. Optometry faculty and students now have a warm, inviting facility providing up-to-date technology and improved access to the collection.